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»Die verloren geglaubte Historia de sancto Magno des Hermannus Contractus (1013–1054)«

An Anniversary Discovery

The title of this paper is adapted from that of a booklet published by Wilhelm Brambach in 1884: *Die verloren geglaubte Historia de sancta Afra und das Salve regina des Hermannus Contractus*. This contained a facsimile of an important source of Hermannus' cycle of chants in honour of St Afra of Augsburg, manuscript Augiensis LX in the Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe. Brambach transcribed the Latin text and provided a commentary. A scholarly edition of the music had to wait until 2004, when Walter Berschin and I collaborated in a volume published in the series *Historiae*, a timely publication, in that Afra was martyred in the year 304, and Hermannus died in 1054.¹

For many years the Afra *historia* was the only one of Hermannus' *historiae* generally known, at least by name. His disciple Berthold had, however, mentioned several others, in his well-known obituary for his master:

Cantus item historiales plenarios, utpote quo musicus peritior non erat, de sancto Georgio, sanctis Gordiano et Epimacho, sancta Afra martyre, sancto Magno confessore, et de sancto Wolfgango episcopo mira suavitate et elegantia euphonicos, praeter alia huiusmodi perplura, neumatizavit et composuit.

(Being a *musicus* more expert than anyone else, he set to music and composed complete cycles of chants for *historiae*, for St George, SS Gordianus and Epimachus, St Afra the Martyr, St Magnus the Confessor and St Wolfgang the Bishop, harmonious in their wonderful sweetness and elegance, with very many others of this kind.)

And in fact in 1894, the anniversary year of Bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg, who died in 994, Otto Kornmüller said he believed he had found the Wolfgang office. A transcription of it was published by Franz Stein in 1977, unfortunately more or less overlooked in the scholarly literature.² A full critical, liturgical edition by myself then appeared in 2002, to commemorate Wolfgang's canonization in the year 1052.³

Finally, by great good fortune, in 2004 I came across a previously unknown, transcribable source of Hermannus' cycle of chants for St Magnus of Füssen. His *historiae* for the other

1 David Hiley and Walter Berschin, *Hermannus Contractus (1013–1054): Historia sanctae Afrae martyris Augustensis* (= Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen. Musicological Studies 65/10), Ottawa 2004.

2 Franz A. Stein, »Das ältere Offizium des hl. Wolfgang in der Handschrift Clm 14872 aus St. Emmeram zu Regensburg in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek München«, in: *Festschrift Ferdinand Haberl zum 70. Geburtstag: Sacerdos et cantus gregoriani magister*, ed. by Franz A. Stein, Regensburg 1977, p. 279–302.

3 David Hiley, *Hermannus Contractus (1013–1054): Historia Sancti Wolfgangi Episcopi Ratisbonensis* (= Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen. Musicological Studies 65/7), Ottawa 2002.

saints named by Berthold have still not been found. This means that we have over 90 antiphons and responsories by Hermannus, a very sizeable body of chant composition, which demands proper investigation alongside Hermannus' other, better-known achievements.

The Sources

The *Magnus historia* is found in two sources: St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 388; and München, Universitätsbibliothek, 2°166–167.

St Gallen 388 (by no means as well known as the Hartker antiphoner of ca. 1000, St Gallen 390–391) dates from the late 11th century. The manuscript is notated with elegant neumes, but without the significative letters, *episemata* and other notational features of earlier St Gall sources. Two offices in the manuscript establish the *terminus post quem*. One is the office for St Remaclus, whose veneration in St Gallen was introduced by Abbot Nortpert (1034–1072), who had come to St Gallen from the monastery of Stablo (Stavelot) in the Ardennes, founded by Remaclus. The other is the office for St Fides; her veneration in St Gallen was introduced by Abbot Ulrich III (1077–1121), who brought her relics from Agen in Aquitaine and built a church for her in St Gallen. The *Magnus* office appears on p. 304. The neumes alone do not permit one to say much about the musical style of the chants, but the typical St Gall letters in the margin of the antiphons (a, e, i, o, v, h, y, and w) which indicate the psalm-tone endings to be used, show that the chants follow the numerical order of the modes.

The other source of the *Magnus historia* is a two-volume manuscript antiphoner from the second half of the 15th century, Universitätsbibliothek München 2°166–167. The *Magnus* office appears in the second volume. Both volumes employ square notation. Paleographically they are not a pair, though they match liturgically without any problem as *pars hiemalis* (MS 166) and *pars aestivalis* (MS 167). As Berthold Riehl pointed out, the style of the decoration in MS 167 is similar to that of a psalter from Ebersberg, Universitätsbibliothek München 2°158, written by one Frater Maurus in 1480.⁴ This date must be approximately right for both volumes. But the antiphoner is difficult to localize. The only other local saint in the book, Afra of Augsburg, indicates that it comes from South Germany, while the secular or Roman cursus of the offices and the prominence given to Augustine should mean a house of Augustinian canons. This rules out both St Mang in Füssen and also Ebersberg, which were both Benedictine.⁵ The series of responsories for the four Sundays in Advent – a standard test of the affiliation of an antiphoner or breviary – is that of a group of Premonstratensian monasteries including not only North France (centred on Prémontré) but also Schäftlarn in Bavaria, yet the saints characteristic of the Schäftlarn liturgy, Corbinian, Dionysius and Juliana, are not specially noticed, and nor do Schäftlarn books display any particular interest in *Magnus*.⁶ One might advance the hypothesis that

4 Berthold Riehl, *Studien zur Geschichte der bayerischen Malerei des 15. Jahrhunderts*, München 1895, p. 110. There are no more recent art-historical studies of these manuscripts.

5 The patron saint of Ebersberg, Sebastian, is not especially noticed in MSS 166–167. Ebersberg books do not pay any special attention to *Magnus*.

one or both of MSS 166–167 were written in Schäftlarn for another Augustinian house. St Mang at Stadtamhof by Regensburg comes immediately to mind, but no liturgical books survive from that monastery to help further comparison.

That Hermannus is the author of the chants is naturally not indicated in either source.⁷ Their identification with the *historia* of which Berthold speaks is strongly supported by their musical style. The following remarks concern the structure of the office and the character of the melodies.

Structure

It is a fair assumption that Hermannus would have composed the *historia* for the Benedictine monastery of St Magnus at Füssen following the Benedictine cursus of the office, and would moreover have arranged the chants in numerical modal order. This is the case with Wolfgang of Regensburg.⁸ For the Afra *historia* Hermannus composed only nine responsories for the Night Office. The provision of nine instead of twelve was quite common at this time: a majority of offices in the Sanctorale of the Hartker antiphoner (St Gallen, ca. 1000), for example, have only nine proper responsories. Others could be taken from the Commune Sanctorum if required. In extant monastic sources of the Afra office the number of twelve responsories is made up with the responsory from First Vespers and two from the Commune Virginum.⁹ The probable original structure of the Magnus *historia* is shown in Table 1.

St Gallen 388 places the responsory of First Vespers, *Magis magnorum*, at the start of the Third Nocturn, making a group of four responsories in all for this nocturn. (It does not indicate if a fourth responsory should be taken from the Commune Sanctorum for the First or Second Nocturn.) More surprisingly, it gives three antiphons for each nocturn, as for the secular cursus, using up antiphons 1–9 for this purpose. The other antiphons (nos. 10–12 and the *antiphona ad cantica*) are assigned to the Little Hours, Prime, Terce, Sext and None. This is clearly not their original location, since the modal numerical order running through the Nocturns and Lauds (modes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3) is thereby turned inside out (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1/6 7 8 1 2 3/2 3 4 5). It may be that the Magnificat antiphon of Second Vespers in St Gallen 388 is not the original one, since it is in mode 7 instead of mode 4, which would continue the numerical series from Lauds.

6 In his description of the manuscript Clytus Gottwald suggested Diessen or Polling. See Clytus Gottwald, *Die Musikhandschriften der Universitätsbibliothek München* (= Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek München 2), Wiesbaden 1968, p. 22–24. But none of the many breviaries from Diessen and Polling now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek pay any particular attention to Magnus. Nor do they have the Premonstratensian responsory series. Gottwald lists the Magnus office among the items of the Sanctorale but does not identify it further (i. e. he does not mention Hermannus).

7 The attribution of the Afra *historia* to him in Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. LX is exceptional, and may be understood in connection with the scribe's practice of indicating sources for all the texts in the manuscript.

8 See the edition in Hiley, *Hermannus Contractus*, Ottawa 2002.

9 See the edition in Hiley and Berschin, *Hermannus Contractus*, Ottawa 2004.

Table 1 – Structure of the Magnus historia

	Incipit	Mode
Ad Primas Vesperas		
Responsorium	<i>Miris magnorum</i>	7
Antiphona ad Magnificat	<i>Precelsi confessoris Christi</i>	1
Ad Matutinas		
Invitatorium	<i>Maximum regem cunctorum</i>	7
In Primo Nocturno		
Antiphona 1	<i>Sanctus vir Magnoaldus</i>	1
Antiphona 2	<i>Hic divino instinctus amore</i>	2
Antiphona 3	<i>Ubi per vere lucis</i>	3
Antiphona 4	<i>Sub sancto itaque patre degens</i>	4
Antiphona 5	<i>Cumque virtute prepollens</i>	5
Antiphona 6	<i>Nam ipsius ad vocem</i>	6
Responsorium 1	<i>Felicissimum beati Magni</i>	1
Responsorium 2	<i>Beatus Magnus cum sancto Gallo</i>	2
Responsorium 3	<i>Post sancti patris obitum Columbani</i>	3
In Secundo Nocturno		
Antiphona 7	<i>Iussione viri dei ursus poma</i>	7
Antiphona 8	<i>Ad preces eius plurima convolans</i>	8
Antiphona 9	<i>O vere mundum et purum</i>	1
Antiphona 10	<i>In visione raptus divina</i>	2
Antiphona 11	<i>Beatus Magnus in hac terra</i>	3
Antiphona 12	<i>Cum Italiam periturus</i>	4
Responsorium 4	<i>Triennio post beati Galli</i>	4
Responsorium 5	<i>Veniens vir dei Brigancium</i>	5
Responsorium 6	<i>Cum Campidonam sanctus venisset</i>	6
In Tertio Nocturno		
Antiphona ad Cantica	<i>O felicem et salutiferam</i>	5
Responsorium 7	<i>Expulsus e Campidona demonibus</i>	7
Responsorium 8	<i>Vir deo amabilis</i>	8
Responsorium 9	<i>Confessor domini sanctissime</i>	7
Ad Laudes		
Antiphona 1	<i>Comperta virtutum beati Magni</i>	6
Antiphona 2	<i>Cum ad pontificem Wicterpum</i>	7
Antiphona 3	<i>Accito ad Campidonam</i>	8
Antiphona 4	<i>Deo dignus diaconus Wicterpi</i>	1
Antiphona 5	<i>Divina donante clemencia</i>	2
Antiphona ad Benedictus	<i>Post transacta trium et septuaginta</i>	3
Ad Secundas Vesperas		
Antiphona ad Magnificat	<i>Inter varias mundi temptationes (SGs 388)</i>	7
	<i>Magnificus tuus Christe confessor (Mu 167)</i>	4

München 167 has the responsory *Magis magnorum* at First Vespers. Being an Augustinian manuscript, it follows the secular cursus, as already noted. But the last four antiphons are not assigned to the Little Hours, as in St Gallen 388, but simply omitted. There is thus a hiatus in the numerical order of the modes between the last antiphon of Night Office (mode 1) and the first of Lauds (mode 6).

Musical Style

Turning to the musical style of the chants, we may observe features which are also very obvious in the Wolfgang and Afra offices. The Magnificat and Benedictus antiphons and the responsories are almost extravagantly melismatic. Authentic chants touch the upper octave or pass beyond it, plagal chants include both the lower fourth and the upper fifth and notes beyond. Several chants encompass both authentic and plagal ranges together. Most important is the way in which nearly all chants use the fifth above the finalis, the fourth below (in plagal modes) and the octave above (in authentic modes) as melodic goals, or as pillars on which to hang the free-flowing melismatic lines. Furthermore, there are frequent leaps not only between finalis and upper fifth but also between upper fifth and upper octave. I have analyzed this style in detail elsewhere, and also related it to Hermannus' concept of the modes as scale segments whose principle points are those same consonant notes of the modal octave – to be understood ultimately, no doubt, as an aural embodiment of the harmony of the whole created world.¹⁰ Example 1 gives the Magnificat antiphon of Second Vespers *Magnificus tuus Christe confessor*.

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The upper fifth of the modal scale, *b*, is here strongly accented, which would be unusual in older E-mode chants. While the finalis is naturally the most important note, other possible cadence notes, such as one would find in a traditional office chant, are neglected. An easy way of testing this is to observe the notes on which each word ends, omitting monosyllables, since they cannot be expected to attract much melodic weight. Many word-endings are strongly marked by means of the subtonal ending *D-E-E* or *a-b-b* (sometimes called the ›Gallican‹ cadence). In all there are 19 endings on *E*, 6 on *b*, 2 on *C*, 2 on *D* and 2 on *G*. That makes 25 endings on ›consonant‹ notes, only 4 on others. Half the endings on *E* (10) and *b* (3) are subtonal.

10 David Hiley, »Das Wolfgang-Offizium des Hermannus Contractus – Zum Wechselspiel von Modustheorie und Gesangspraxis in der Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts«, in: *Die Offizien des Mittelalters: Dichtung und Musik*, ed. by Walter Berschin and David Hiley (= Regensburger Studien zur Musikgeschichte 1), Tutzing 1999, p. 129–142; »Die Afra-Gesänge des Hermannus Contractus. Liturgische Melodien und die Harmonie des Universums«, in: *Hl. Afra: Eine frühchristliche Märtyrerin in Geschichte, Kunst und Kult*, ed. by Manfred Weitlauff and Melanie Thierbach (= Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistums-geschichte 38, Ausstellungskatalog des Diözesanmuseums St. Afra), Augsburg 2004, p. 112–119.

Mag-ni - fi - cus tu - us Christe con - fes - sor Magnus

in sar-co-pha-go la-pi - de - o si-bi di - vi-ni-tus pro - cu - ra-to

con - dig-no ho-no-re ab e - pis - co-po Toz - zo-ne tu - mu-la-tus,

in nu-me-ris lon-ge la - teque mi - ra-cu - lis

a te do-mi - ne Ihe-su ce - li - tus est glo - ri - fi - ca-tus,

cu-ius con - ti-nu - is nos que-su - mus pa-tro-ci - ni - is

ab om - ni pe-ri - cu - lo nunc et per - hen - ni - ter

tu - e - a - ris. Ps. Magnificat.

Example 1: Antiphon *Magnificus tuus Christe confessor*

The style is not uncommon in chants of the 12th century and later, but Hermannus is the earliest composer to achieve such a high degree of ›consonance‹, if we may so call it, in his melodies. Furthermore, very few later composers attempt so florid a melodic style. Perhaps it was the very boldness of Hermannus' musical imagination which made it desirable to emphasize the consonant notes. For these notes are the fixed tonal spheres along which the music describes its celestial orbit, so that the rapturous melodic arc does not sweep out into chaos but remains on the harmonious course ordained by the Creator.¹¹

11 A complete transcription of the *Magnus historia* from München 167, together with more extended discussion of the office, in particular its Latin text, appears in my article »The *Historia Sancti Magni* by Hermannus Contractus (1013–1054)«, in: *Music in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Bryan Gillingham*, ed. by Terence Bailey and Alma Colk Santuosso, Aldershot 2007, p. 367–392.